

**Thomas Jefferson to Robert Smith, December 23, 1806, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

**TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY J. MSS. (ROBERT SMITH.)**

Washington, Dec. 23, 06.

Dear Sir, —Yours of yesterday has been duly considered. What I had myself in contemplation was to wait until we got news from Louisville of Dec. 15 (the day of Burr's proposed general rendezvous). The post comes from thence in 12 days. The mail next expected will be of that date. If we then find that his force has had no effectual opposition at either Mariette or Cincinnati, & will not be stopped at Louisville, then, without depending on the opposition at Fort Adams, tho' I have more dependence on that than on any other) I should propose to lay the whole matter before Congress, ask an immediate appropriation for a naval equipment and at the same time order 20,000 militia (or volunteers) from the western states to proceed down the river to retake N. O. presuming our naval equipment would be there before them. In the meantime I would recommend to you to be getting ready & giving orders of preparation to the officers and vessels which we can get speedily ready that is to say, the 3 sloops at Washington, the 2 gunboats and ketch at N. York, the 3 gunboats (not including No. 1) and ketch at Norfolk & the 3 gunboats at Charleston: all this on the supposition that the officers are of opinion that the gunboats can be safely sent at this season. We now see what would be the value of *strong* vessels of little draught for the shoaly coasts of the Gulf of Mexico. At any rate we should have some as powerful as a 12 feet draught of water could be made to bear. Affectionate salutations.